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A

COLLECTION

OF

FACTS AND STATEMENTS,

RELATIVE TO THE

FATAL EVENT,

WHICH OCCURRED AT

THE THEATRE,

IN RICHMOND, (Va.)

On the 26th December, 1811,

Principally extracted from the ENQUIRER.

RICHMOND:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JOHN O'LYNCH.

1812.

FINAL NAME & ITEM COUNT
OF
THE SMITHS FIBERS

1692196

To the Public.

The unhappy event which occurred in our *devoted* city, has excited the tenderest and the severest feelings of which our nature is susceptible. It is, doubtless, expected that some one should endeavor to satisfy the eager expectation of curiosity;—to dry the tear that bedews the pillow of sensibility, other resource must be had. So far as a *compilation* goes, we use our feeble efforts: farther we dare not, we would not venture. As the servants of the public, we have collected this tribute, and offer it with the most respectful regard.

Overwhelming Calamity.

IN the whole course of our existence, we have never taken up our pen under a deeper gloom than we feel at this moment. It falls to our lot to record one of the most distressing scenes which can happen in the whole circle of human affairs. The reader must excuse the incoherence of the narrative; there is scarce a dry eye in this distracted city. Weep, my fellow citizens; for we have seen a night of woe, which scarce any eye hath seen, or ear hath heard, and no tongue can adequately tell.

How can we describe the scene? No pen can paint it; no imagination can conceive it. A whole Theatre wrapt in flames---a gay and animated assembly suddenly thrown on the very verge of the grave--many of them, oh! how many, precipitated in a moment into eternity--youth and beauty, and old age and genius, overwhelmed in one promiscuous ruin—— shrieks, groans and human agony in every shape—— this is the heart-rending scene that we are called upon to describe. We sink under the effort. Reader! excuse our feelings, for they are the feelings of a whole city.

Let us collect our ideas as well as we can. On Thursday night a new play and a new after piece were played for the benefit of Mr. Placide. Crowds wanted to fill the Theatre——it was the last benefit this season——there were not less than 600 present. The play went off—the pantomime began; the first act was over. The whole scene was before us——and all around us was mirth and festivity. Oh God! what a horrible revolution did one minute produce! The curtain rose on the second act of the pantomime--the orchestra was in full chorus; and Mr. Wells came on to open the scene; when sparks of fire began to fall on the back part of the stage, and Mr. Robertson came out in unutterable distress, waved his hand to the ceiling, and uttered these

appalling words——" The house is on fire." His hand was immediately stretched forth to the persons in the stage-box to help them on the stage——and and their retreat in that direction. This is all that we caught of the stage——the cry of *fire, fire*, passed with electric rapidity through the house--every one flew from their seats to gain the lobbies and stairs.

The scene baffles all description. The most heart piercing cries pervaded the house. "Save me, save me!" Wives asking for their husbands, females and children shrieking; while the gathering element came rolling on its curling flames and columns of smoke——threatening to devour every human being in the building. Many were trod under foot — several were thrown back from the windows which they were struggling to leap. The stair ways were immediately blocked up; the throng was so great that many were raised several feet over the heads of the rest-- the smoke threatened an instant suffocation. We cannot dwell on this picture. We saw——we felt it——like others, we gave up ourselves for lost——we cannot depict it. Many leaped from the windows of the first story, and were saved——children and females and men of all descriptions were seen to precipitate themselves on the ground below——most of these escaped; though several of them with broken legs, and thighs, and hideous contusions. Most if not all who were in the pit escaped. Mr. Taylor, the actor on the occasion who quitted the orchestra finding his retreat by the back way cut off, leapt into the pit whence he entered the semicircular avenue which leads to the door of the theatre, and found it nearly empty. He was the last that escaped from the pit! how melancholy that many who were in the boxes did not also jump into the pit and fly in the same direction.

But those who were in the boxes, above and below, pushed for the lobbies—many, as has been said, escaped through the windows - but the most of them had no other resource than to descend the stairs, many escaped in that way---but so great was the pressure that they retarded each other; until the devouring element approached to sweep them into eternity. Several who even emerged from the building were so much scorched that they have since perished---some even jumped from the second window-- some others have been dreadfully burnt.

The fire flew with a rapidity, almost beyond example. Within ten minutes after it caught, the whole house was wrapt in flames.---The coloured people in the gallery, most of them, escaped thro' the flames cut off from the rest of the house: some have no doubt fallen victims. The pit and boxes had but one common avenue---thro' which the whole crowd had to escape, save those only who leaped through the windows.

But the scene which ensued——it is impossible to paint. Women with dishevelled hair; fathers and mothers shrieking out for their children, husbands for their wives, brothers for their sisters, filled the whole area on the outside of the building. A few who had escaped, plunged again into the flames to save some dear object of their regard, and were perished!! The Governor perhaps shared this melancholy fate. Others were frantic and would have rushed to destruction but for the hand of a friend. The bells tolled. Almost the whole town rushed to the fatal spot.

The flame must have been caught to the scenery from some light behind——Robertson saw it, when it was no longer than his arm——Young saw it on the roof when it first burst through. Every article of the Theatre was consumed; as well as the dwelling house next to it.

But what is wealth in comparison of the valuable lives which have gone forever? The whole town is throwded in woe. Heads of families extinguished forever——many and many is the house, in which a chasm has been made that can never be filled up. We cannot dwell on this picture——not look at the catalogue of the victims, and then conceive the calamity which has fallen upon us. We must drop the pen.

NARRATIVE.

We cannot paint the details of the scene on Thursday night—No description can do justice to its horrors—and there were so few persons so cool and self-collected as to accurately paint any part of the mass of the woes which fell in a moment upon us. Some scenes are so fraught with horror, that a delicate pencil would have to skip them—Besides, time enough has not been had to bring together a accurate group of woes

It is painful to touch upon the catastrophe of those who have gone forever. Their ashes are in the grave—but their memories are entombed in our hearts.

The Generous and worthy Smith, who but a few days since was crowned with one of the highest honors which Virginia can bestow, is snatched from his country, his distracted family, his children and his friends!! It is not certainly known whether he had effected his escape from the building and rushed again into the flames to save his child! There is a confusion in the story, and perhaps it is as well if it never were cleared up.

Abraham B. Venable, President of the Bank of Virginia; a man who has filled our public stations with very high reputation; who has been in the house of Representatives and in the Senate of the United States, during the most interesting periods—he too is gone! He has left no wife or children; but a long train of relatives and friends to weep his loss. He was in the box with ladies; he begged them not to be precipitate or impatient; but was at length driven towards a window in the lobby, with a crowd of others. The suffocating smoke came rolling on, Mr V. and some who were with him were thrown down. Mr Noland fell towards the window and was saved; Mrs V. fell the other way and perished in the smoke!

Many doubtless perished in the same way. The volume of smoke, which could not at first escape through the roof, was bent downwards; black, dense, almost saturated with oily vapours. Many were suffocated by it, who might have had strength enough to leap the windows. Several were saved by the fresh air which they inhaled at the windows—or even at a cranny.

Poor Betts! a man of astonishing assiduity and attainments at the bar, has perished with his wife and her neice—he fell perhaps a victim to his hopes. He thought it more prudent to sit still with his wife, while the crowd passed by: but her sister-in-law Mrs Page, yielding to the sympathetic impulse of her fears, rushed forward and is saved—What a seal has death set upon his family!—At one fell swoop, five helpless children are converted into orphans.

How heavily has the hand of death fallen upon the family of the Harvies! Poor mourners! deeply indeed have ye drunk of the cup of affliction. Within five short years ye had numbered amongst the dead, the venerable John Harvie, the distinguished Lewis Harvie, the amiable Mrs. McCraw, the interesting little boy of Dr. Brockenbrough. But by one blow, the distressed mother, Mrs. Harvie, has lost her noble and high-souled daughter Juliana, her excellent son F. J. Harvie, and that sweet little girl, Mary Whitlock, her beloved Grand-daughter!!! Reader, conceive if you can, what you never can have felt.

Lieut. James Gibbon, of the U. S. Navy, has gone with the rest! Young as he was, he had tasted of the cup of affliction. He was taken captive in the Philadelphia, and immured in the prisons of Tripoli—On this fatal night, he and Mr. John Lynch were in the same box with Mrs. Gallego, Miss Conyers, Mr. Venable and others—when the alarm was first given, they endeavored to quiet the apprehensions of the ladies, but when the front scene was in flames, they reached over for Miss Conyers who had sunk motionless below—they took her over; they held her between them in a state of insensibility, her head falling over Mr. Lynch's left arm. In this manner they proceeded towards the head of the stairs, when Gibbon said, "Lynch, leave Sally to me. I am strong enough to carry her: she is light, and you can save some body else." Mr. L. replied, "God bless you, Gibbon, there is

the stair," and then turned round to seek some of the other ladies. Poor Gibbon and his lovely and interesting companion sunk together.

We must drop this recital.—We have already stated the deaths of Mrs. Girardin and her sweet boy—of Mrs. Gibson, whose husband is now perhaps on his way from Europe; what a blow upon his heart!—of the venerable Mrs. Page; of Mrs. Lesslie; of the lovely Nancy Green, the daughter of Mr. Green, the Manager; of the amiable Mrs. R. Greenhow. The particulars of most of their fates are wrapt in oblivion. Their ashes are in the grave.

These perished amid the flames—but Mrs. Patterson and Mr. Wm. Brown were overwhelmed by the crowd.

Let us change the scene.—It is a far more grateful task to describe the fate of those who have, as it were, miraculously escaped. It is some relief to our feelings, to contemplate those who seem again to have "revisited the realms of light." It is almost as if the grave had given them up again from its jaws. We are sorry, indeed, that our limits do not permit us to furnish any but hasty sketches of events.

Mr. John G. Jackson was overcome by the suffocating smoke and fell senseless. His last recollection was that his feet were descending; but whether the floor or stairway were broken or he had reached the descent, he was not conscious—but insensibly he descended to the level of the pit, where a strong current of fresh air revived him as he lay amongst a heap of prostrate persons. He struggled to rise and found himself on his feet with a lady clinging to him and beseeching him to save her. With difficulty he found the door, not being acquainted with the house, but at last he emerged with the lady, when the fire was pouring through the front windows, and ere they had advanced far, the roof tumbled in.

Mr. M. W. Hancock carried with him to the play, his niece, the two Miss Hancocks and three boys. When the alarm was given, he did all in his power to save his *protégés*—but was at last separated from them all. The flames were approaching with a degree of fury and rapidity that [illegible] exceeded. [illegible] the scene had been all bustle, confusion and consternation; it now [illegible] in one of [illegible] and horror [illegible] that beggars description. He attempted to reach the

centre window in the lobby of the lower boxes. He at last succeeded in mounting on the heads of the crowd between him and the window, and finally reached it, surrounded by the unavailing and afflicting cries of those suffocating around him. He stepped within the window and with difficulty raised the lower sash—he thrust his feet out, when the sash was suddenly pressed down and caught his feet between it and the sill. He extricated one foot but could not the other, until those behind him who had sufficient strength left to mount over him and the lower sash which had [illegible] down, he found himself so far gone from suffocation that he gave himself up as lost—the flames however, dashed over his head, and the introduction of fresh air [illegible] the window gave him new life. Those behind him being no longer able to keep him down, he with a last effort raised the sash, extricated his foot and jumped out. It gives us sincere pleasure to add that the three boys and girls whom he carried with him have all escaped with their lives.*

Mr. John Lynch was the only person who passed the window after Mr. Hancock. After he had left poor Gibbon, he met with a variety of horrid adventures. All was over darkness in the lobby and suffocation threatened.—It was an awful crisis, and but that one of the windows was burst open and let in fresh air, he thinks all in the lobby must have perished; at length he reached the window, where he found a gentleman fixed fast, whom he since believes to have been Mr. Hancock. After an awful lapse, the flames were rushing on in all directions. His hair caught fire, hope deserted him; he was struck with horror at the idea of being burnt alive. He rushed towards the window, waving his hands as quick as possible over his head and clothes. This was a dreadful moment; he saw many drop down on each side of him suffocated—The window was now free, and he was scarcely on the bottom of it when he heard an awful crash behind him. He threw himself out and providence preserved him.*

Mr. Robert Greenslow precipitated himself down the stairs over fire-brands and bodies, with his fine son in his arms—and was saved.

[illegible] made a wonderful escape with his

* [illegible]

child. His lady was saved by a strong man. Hung by by the hair of the head over the bodies in the stair-way.

Mr. Stetson fell in the lobby with his head to the wall—but for a crack which his mouth accidentally caught, he would have died for want of air—the fresh air that streamed through it revived him enough to lift his head to the window—a fresh draught of it revived him and he jumped out.

Mr. Gordon was saved in a state of insensibility. His lady was saved by jumping through a window and clinging to a man, and her little daughter by hanging to her mantle. They had three children there, and not one of them was lost.

Several individuals were active in risqueing their lives for their fellow-creatures. Dr. McCaw let down several from the window—Mr. Doyle, Mr. Grace and others, who were out, received many as they were let or jumped down.

There are some of the unfortunate victims of Thursday night, whose particular fates we have in vain attempted to penetrate. We have taken uncommon pains to collect an authentic narrative of the events of this disastrous night; we have requested the aid of every person who we had *heard* was capable of furnishing any information, and to whom the subject was not too tender to be mentioned; yet it is with some pain we have failed in our efforts. We should be sorry even to wear the most distant appearance of neglecting the fate or memory of any one who perished on that dreadful night—but this appearance at least is inevitable. There were few persons so cool and collected as to be able to illustrate the horrors of that night; several who were able to point out particular threads in the disastrous web of destiny are no doubt unknown to us: And some who have promised to reduce their narrative to paper, have been prevented from doing so by their engagements or their feelings. The following are the only statements which we have received. They are sufficient however, to communicate a faint idea of the collective horrors of the scene; what a group would have breathed upon the canvass, if a few faint strokes of the pencil are so affecting! If such were the feelings of a few individuals, what must have been the situation of 200 people!—How

impotent is the pencil of Raphael in the Vatican, when he attempts to paint the conflagration of Rome!

We should still proceed in our researches—but the reader has contemplated horrors enough. It is time to leave the paths of death. We have dwelt long enough upon this melancholy theme; and we are anxious to relieve our columns from the sombre sable of woe. With this paper, therefore let us cease the strains of grief: let us drop the subject. There is only another point of view in which we yet propose to consider it; but this is not directly calculated to harrow up the feelings of such as have lost their friends. Let us open the pages of history, and see whether this is the only city, which has been afflicted by so severe a visitation—whether this is the only people whom the paths of *pleasure* have led to the grave!"

We have learnt nothing very particularly authentic of the fate of Mrs. Wilson—we have merely heard that with the cool and deliberate resolution of a strong mind, she remained for a time in her first position, fearing rather the consequences of precipitation and tumult, than the rapidity of the flames. They indeed baffled all reasonable calculation, and too many have fallen victims to this fatal mistake! Mrs. Wilson perished—one of the best of wives, the best of mothers, the most exemplary stepmother that ever lived! Words cannot express the agony of her distressed family—the deep dejection of all her friends.

The fate of Mrs. Heron is also wrapt in oblivion. She had been unfortunate enough to lose her husband by a disastrous accident—and her children have now lost their mother by one still more rapid and resistless. She was eminently true to all the domestic charities of life.—— But neither the band of affection, of friendship, nor respect could snatch her from the tomb.

Mrs. Cook, the innocent wife of Mr. William Cook, and her daughter Rebecca, perished together. Long shall the disconsolate husband and father, weep over their ashes. Three motherless children are left behind her.

But why spread before the reader, all the havoc of the scene? The young have sunk as well as the old—the interesting Margaret Cochrad, the third daughter of Mr. Charles Cochrad; Patey Grillin, the only child of her aged mother; Miss Nelson, Miss Page, Miss Craig,

all of them dear to their families and friends. William Southgate the only prop of the family of Wright Southgate, dec.—Each has his merits; each has the public tear.

What a scene was exhibited for several hours after the tragic event! Many were ignorant of the fate of their friends. Almost every one had his fears and suspicions. During the next day, two persons could scarcely meet without exchanging expressions full of solicitude; "Have you lost any of your family?"—"Is your family safe?" "I am glad of it, I am glad of it!"

Many escaped with extreme difficulty. Several have broken a limb. Mr. John Richards has broken a leg; Mr. Carter Page has broken his. Miss Pendleton has also broken a limb—Mrs. Scott of Fairfax, is much burnt. Some were severely burnt, whose cloths were whole.

STATEMENTS.

I occupied on Thursday evening a seat in the lower corner box on the left of the entrance into the Theatre. The first I saw of the fire a piece of paper in full blaze was descending from the top and was then about fifteen feet above the level of the stage, ere it alighted, a general cry of "fire" pervaded the house: and the persons immediately quitted their seats. I was among the last to do so, and when I got half the distance to the stairway I met with Mrs. Scott, a lady of my acquaintance who I entreated to be calm, and not too precipitate; as her safety depended on deliberation: her answer was "I am not alarmed and will do so:" we advanced a few feet and a loud cry that it was a "false alarm" induced me to return to the corner where I had sat and looked through a door then open, and there I discovered the scenery in full blaze and the canopy on fire. I hastened back to the crowd, being a stranger at the Theatre and ignorant of its construction I knew of no mode of escape except thro' the avenue I had ascended to the boxes. I found it blocked up by the crowd, and the light being very vivid, I discovered that the persons in were principally Ladies: they were greatly alarmed and crying for relief, and entreating the crowd not to destroy them: still persisting in the belief that as the fire was in the rear, the

danger was not very imminent; unwilling to crowd on them, beforehand, and being too large to encounter the struggle I refrained from pressing upon them, but in a minute I found my hopes were illusive—a black thick smoke rushed upon us, so instantly cloyingly suffocating that those who had advanced to their fears by crowding sunk with a groan, and I found a space in front no longer crowded except by prostrate bodies. I advanced until the external light ascertained to me that I was opposite a window near the head of the stairs; this I endeavoured to force, but the bodies of some persons standing in that direction stopt me two feet short of it. In the efforts made after the smoke reached me I must have consumed half a minute. I then was compelled to breathe this oppressive smoke, which was so intolerable, that I could only make one convulsive struggle to advance, and I then sunk senseless.—My last recollection was that my feet were descending; but whether the floor or stair-way were broken, or I had reached the descent, I am not conscious. I heard no noise. Insensibly I descended to the level of the pit, and there a strong current of fresh air revived me, as I lay amongst a heap of prostrate persons. I struggled to rise and found myself upon my feet with a lady clinging to me; she entreated me to save her, and as she was unable to support herself I carried her in various directions to find the outer door, which I avoided from a mistake that had almost proved fatal. I saw several persons falling from the windows into the street in full blaze, and my impression was that becoming desperate by the fire, they were plunging from the boxes into the pit, the place of all others most to be avoided, in this effort to find the way out I saw several gentlemen running to and fro to whom I addressed the enquiry "which is the way out?" but obtained no answer. I at length determined to find the avenue through which the great column of air entered; and by running towards it, soon gained the door. When we got out, the fire was pouring through the front windows, and ere we had advanced far the roof tumbled in. The lady whom I rescued still claimed my assistance and I carried her to a place of safety—I saw no more of the scene until the walls tumbled down, and do not know if any or how many got out after we did, but I am confident that if those from without had ran in, many who fell by the suffocating

in and were burned before they regained strength to rise would have been saved.

J. G. JACKSON.

December 30, 1811.

Sir.—Agreeably to your request, I proceed to state the circumstances attending my situation and escape from the Theatre on the awful night of the 26th. inst. I carried with me to the play my niece and the two Miss Herons, Alfred Gilliat, Peter Kirby and Nicholas Gilliam nephews of my wife and self. The House was much crowded, for the girls, I with difficulty procured seats among some of their friends mostly ladies in box No. 8. and for the boys seats in the back of box No. 7—and was sitting when the curtain rose in the second act of the afterpiece next the boys, immediately after which the alarm of fire was given, and instantly I saw the fire falling on the stage. On rising from my seat I desired the boys to take care of themselves and escape as soon as possible, and proceeded myself towards the seats in the next box which were occupied by my neice, the Miss Herons and their party, with the intention of assisting them out of the House. I reached the place without much difficulty, but the party had all left their seats and in endeavoring to return thro' the lobby I was carried with the current of the crowd opposite to the place from whence I had departed and found that Mrs. Gibbon, Mrs. Gallego, Miss Conyers and the three Boys had all left their seats—In the then state of affairs it was evidently fruitless for me to search for either of the persons of whom I had been in pursuit, and at this juncture I began to think of myself for the first time,—I was in the lobby next to box, No. 7, and the flames were approaching with a degree of fury and rapidity that perhaps was never exceeded—hitherto the scene had been all bustle, confusion and consternation: it now changed to one of awful horror and [illegible] all description: all ceremony was forgotten in conforming to the first law of nature. I perceived the centre window in the front end of the House and determined to endeavor to reach it: with the assistance [illegible] in my hand, and the partitions betwixt the lobby and box

No. 7, I mounted on the heads of the crowd betwixt me and the window; by this time the House was filled with darkness from smoke, but groping I providentially reached the side of the window, surrounded by the unavailing and afflicting cries of those suffocating around me: I stepped within the window, and with difficulty raised the lower sash with the intention of slipping out, and had thrust my feet thro' for that purpose, when the sash was suddenly pressed down and caught my feet betwixt it and the window sill. I extricated one foot but could not extricate the other, until those behind me who had sufficient strength to mount over me and the lower sash which kept me down, did so: in this situation I found myself so far gone from suffocation, that I gave myself up as lost, the flames however roared over my head and the introduction of fresh air at the bottom of the window gave me new life, those behind me being no longer able to keep me down, ——I with a last effort raised the window extricated my foot and jumped out, without receiving any injury from the fall, though much injured in one of my feet from bruises occasioned by the pressure of the window sash, and I have other wounds and bruises received in the lobby and window so slight however as under other considerations not to be worth naming. Mr. John Lynch merchant of this city was I believe the only person who past thro' the window after me. I left many others about it, all of whom must have perished; so rapid was the fire that I do not think three minutes could have elapsed from the first alarm until I reached the window: at any rate with all the exertion that I could make, about thirty feet would I think include the whole space of my progress from the first alarm until I reached the window, and at that time many were expiring with suffocation—In the midst of so much sorrow and grief it affords me much consolation that the three boys and girls whom I carried with me have all escaped with their lives, tho' the efforts which I made with the view of assisting them were unavailing. The scene which ensued out of the house, was witnessed by many, and like that within, will long be remembered, but probably never adequately described.

I am respectfully sir,

Your obt. servt.

M. W. HAWKINS.

SIR—In consequence of the conversation, we had this evening, I take up my pen; and without further preface, state, that when the commencement of the dreadful fire of Thursday night was announced from the Stage, I was leaning over the back of the front box, which was next to the north side of the Theatre; on my left hand was Lt. Gibbon and on the bench directly below, were Mrs. Gallego, Miss Conyers, Mrs. Gibbon, Mrs. Braxton, Mr. Venable and others, whose names I cannot recollect; the alarm of fire was immediately succeeded by a cry of, 'tis a false alarm, there is no danger, and as we did not imagine any, both Lieut. Gibbon and myself endeavoured to quiet the apprehensions of the ladies in the box: I fixed my eyes on the Stage; the scene which was down, had the appearance of a transparency, behind which gleams of light seemed to descend; but this did not convince me, or any person near me; a moment however decided, the front scene is in flames, and I then resolved to give all that assistance which humanity dictated, and reached over for Miss Conyers, who had sunk motionless below. Lieut. Gibbon did the same, we took her over, we held her between us, she is in a state of insensibility, and to all appearance dead, her head falling over my left arm; in this manner we proceeded towards the head of the stairs, when Gibbon said, Lynch leave Sally to me, I am strong enough to carry her, she is light, and you can save somebody else I replied, God bless you, Gibbon, there is the stairs. I then turned round and proceeded for my original situation in order to take out some of the other Ladies, and as I returned, I perceived the dreadful element rush with the rapidity of lightning from the stage, along the facing of the upper boxes, taking both sides at the same time, and from the dreadful column of smoke which was then thrown down upon the centre of the front boxes, the flames must have met there: all was now utter darkness in the lobby, and suffocation threatened. I could not do any thing, I was in the midst of a crowd of sufferers, the cries were dreadful: it was an awful period, and only that the end window was then burst open, we must all, all that were in that lobby, certainly have been suffocated: the opening of the window brought relief and hope. I moved on with the throng to the window, and got to the West side of it. There was a gentleman in a light coloured coat, fixed fast in the window seat (whom I

since understand was Mr. Hancock,) it appeared to me that his legs and thighs were fixed betwixt the sill of the window and the brick work; men and women were precipitating themselves on his shoulders, regardless of his entreaties to allow him to free himself, and of the fate that awaited them below: many bodies were laying on the ground to appearance dead, and the flames were passing out of the top of the window; I was undetermined, and at that moment I was pushed away towards the west wall of the Theatre: again suffocation threatened, the flames were rushing on in all directions, my hair caught fire, (for my hat was gone,) hope deserted me; I was struck with horror at the idea of being burnt alive, I rushed towards the window, waving my hands as quick as possible over my head and clothes; this was a dreadful moment, I saw many drop down on each side of me suffocated, and I passed over some bodies on my way; the window was now free, and I was scarcely on the bottom of it, when I heard an awful crash behind me, I threw myself out, and providence preserved me. I am with heartfelt feelings of congratulation on your own providential escape,

Very respectfully,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

JOHN LYNCH.

Dec. 29, 1811.

DEAR SIR—Being told, that for the purpose of collecting the best information concerning all the circumstances attending the late dreadful conflagration, you were desirous of obtaining from each individual who had escaped, a short account of the manner and circumstances under which such escape was effected; I send you the following statement:—

As the curtain arose for the commencement of the 3d act of the pantomime, I was standing in the lobby on the lower range of boxes, conversing with some of my friends thro' the broken panel of a box about [illegible] feet from the head of the stairs. This box was entirely filled, among others who were in it, and who have perished, I remember Mrs. Gallot, Miss Convers, Mrs. Gibbon and Mr. Vernole. Immediately after the rising of the curtain, and as

the scene commenced, I saw several flakes of fire fall about the centre of the stage; but supposed it was probably the falling of some ornament or lights intended to illuminate the scene. The cry of "fire" was instantly given—I advanced a few steps into the lobby enquiring from whence the alarm arose, and met several persons, some of them known to me, calling out that it was a false alarm—I turned about and now saw the curtain dropped, and a very large bright light behind it—I then felt assured that the house was on fire in that quarter—The consternation and confusion had become general; I felt no fear whatever from the flames, and was only apprehensive that by the impetuosity of the crowd, many would be crushed to death; and with others united in calling out to those around me, that the danger was magnified, and beseeching them not to press so fast on those before: we rolled to the winds; I endeavored now to force my way back to the side of the box I had left, to calm the fears of those with whom I had been speaking, and to wait until the crowd had passed; this, however, was impossible; the column of the crowd in which I was enclosed, bore me irresistibly, but slowly along towards the stairs; still feeling no fears of being overtaken by the flames. I continued folded in my cloak and pressing my weight backwards, to give as far as possible an opportunity to those on the head of the stairs, (where the pressure already seemed dreadful) to effect their escape; suddenly I perceived a thick, black, hot smoke, curling down our heads; persons were no longer to be distinguished—utter darkness prevailed—suffocation was fast approaching—for the first moment I was seriously alarmed—and by the most violent exertions endeavoured to make my way to the head of the stairs—it appeared to me I could not gain an inch—Those around me were sinking—my own strength failed, and I verily believed that I never should see the light again; at this instant a window on my right was forced open—the fresh air somewhat dissipated the smoke and revived us to new exertion—a universal scream of mingled joy and despair was given, and a rush towards the window, those next it seemed unable to move, and cried out "that they were pressed to death." I was within a few paces of it—and by desperate exertions endeavored to reach it; I could not; in a last effort of despair, assisting myself

by the shoulder of some one next me. I drew my feet up and was thrown by the united impulse of others, and my own exertions, with my feet directly on the window sill, at the same instant fortunately seizing a broken fragment of the sash. I passed my head under it and touched the ground without material injury—I left many behind me.

THOMSON F. MASON.

Monday morning.

SIR—My friend Mr. Thomas Nelson has informed me, that you wished me to state the particulars of my providential escape from the dreadful fire which consumed the Theatre on Thursday night last. They are as follow: The late period at which I arrived at the play house, compelled me to ascend to the second row of boxes to procure a seat for Mrs. Pendleton, and myself, where we remained until I discovered the second spark of fire fall on the stage in front of the curtain, when I immediately heard the cry of fire from behind—I then left my seat, and proceeded along the gang way, towards the head o the stair case, entreating the affrighted females to have patience, and not precipitate themselves into the immense crowd that was pressing forward, lest we should be trampled to death, believing that by waiting a few minutes, we should have more room, and consequently descend with more expedition and safety.

In a few seconds, however, I was convinced by the effect of an indescribable current of steam on my flesh, and smoke on my lungs, that I had miscalculated, and that our escape must be instantaneous or not at all, as suffocation threatened. With an energy which nothing but such a dreadful crisis could inspire, I rushed forward, retaining my wife's arm locked fast in mine, until I attained the first turn in the stair case just below, or perhaps nearly opposite the window, next the front corner, on the lower, or side next the meeting house. At this place, the crowd behind me trod on the tail of my large loose great coat, completely stopped my progress, and had well nigh thrown me backwards, which nothing but an exertion I did not think myself ca-

pable of making, prevented. In this situation my wife, (great God, sir, figure to yourself my agony!) was torn from me by the resistless force of the crowd, and just at the instant of our separation, numbers were trampled down, and I did verily believe, that she was one of those unfortunate victims. I thought I had then lost the object which had thus far stimulated my exertions, and remained perfectly motionless for some seconds, having fixed myself in the corner of the brick wall to prevent being forced down, and reflected on the impossibility of extricating myself from the impending destruction, by following the prodigious crowd that was then wedging me in my fortunate corner. While these reflections were crossing my mind, I heard the window forced open just above me, and felt the reviving influence of the delicious air which rushed upon me, and invigorated the efforts which then saved my life. By exertions which I now consider as supernatural, I reached the window, which at that auspicious moment I enjoyed undisputed possession of, and after looking down to ascertain where I might alight with least injury to myself, as well as to others who had preceded me, I seated myself on the window sill, and eased myself off very deliberately and gradually, reflecting at the same time, that if I could contrive my clothes to touch the wall as I descended, the force of my passage down would be somewhat broken. I soon experienced the happy reality of this experiment, for I landed on my feet, perfectly erect, and have never since felt the least soreness or inconvenience from my manner of escape. Thus, sir, I have in a hasty manner complied with the request to the best of my recollection. I will not attempt to describe to you my sensations for some time after I had escaped, for altho' miraculously preserved myself, from what I had seen before I got out of the house, and what I saw afterwards. I was agonized under the conviction that a beloved wife and child had perished. You who are a husband and a parent, must if possible finish the picture.

I am sir,

Your most obedient,

EDMUND PENDLETON, Jr.

C. Huntington Bacchus states for the information and at the request of Mr. Ritchie, that he and his party were in the upper boxes; that he was standing in the box where his party was sitting, close to the fire place on the left of the theatre, that the first information he had of the fire was from the two sparks, or flakes of fire, that succeeded each other as they fell upon the stage. Mr. Robertson was then on his knees before the portrait of a beautiful lady, which was represented upon the back or after scene, and, as I supposed, was performing a part of the pantomime for I heard no exclamation of his, till after the sparks fell. Mr. Robertson then looked up, and I think reported that the house was in flames.—I was then occupied in detaining Miss Maria Nelson, Miss Mary Page and Miss Elizabeth Pendleton, by persuasion from rushing into the pressing multitude; pointed to the stage and informed them that the distance was such, that the fire could not possibly arrive soon to injure us in our retreat, and they would endanger their lives by the oppression of the crowd—Miss Nelson and Miss Page concurred with me in opinion. Miss Pendleton shrieked and was apparently fainting; I caught her, and rather by stern advice and caution which I used, she revived, or recovered her faculties. I then turned to Misses Nelson and Page, who seemed very calm and collected; at this instant Miss Pendleton forsook us, and the same moment the scenery descended in a terrible blaze upon the stage; we then began gently to move out of the box, and we had just merged from the door, when it appeared to me, that the most if not all the canopy or vault of the theatre fell in with considerable noise like the rushing of flame, into the pit, or hung round the gallery and upper boxes like curtains—I suppose it was one minute from the sparks to the falling of scenery. ——I did not look again towards the stage. I moved moderately forward about twelve or fifteen feet toward the stairs, and the ladies as I supposed near me. There was just light enough to see blackness of a very dense smoke which was rapidly rushing and whirling over our heads; I heard the breaking of a window, it struck me forcibly as a most prudent thought. Even here and at this moment I did not think there was great danger in proceeding the usual way out of the theatre, although I trembled much at the apprehension of error in my calculation

tion of safety from delay—The construction and materials of the house, I was with others ignorant of, but the lightning velocity of the flame exhibited the fact that I was mistaken as to the composition, and I trembled. The window burst through, the air reached me, it was pleasant, I was within six feet of it. I turned involuntarily. I caught the fresh breezes which rushed in to produce an equilibrium—the flame and hot smoke of turpentine and paint reached my hair, my right ear, and curled round my head.—I inhaled it, my nose was burnt, all reflection was selfishness. I sprang to the window and leaped about 12 feet from the house and about 30 feet from the ground.

Sir—Myself and daughter sat in the left front box on the second seat from the side [illegible] at the moment the actor [illegible] I saw several sparks of fire fall on the stage near the actor—there being a general motion throughout the house, a voice was heard saying, "keep your seats, there is no danger," which caused a delay among many—and I anxiously looking from whence the sparks proceeded, discovered the upper part of the scenery on fire, and at the same instant the cry of fire became general, and every person alarmed crowded from their boxes in such confusion, that there was no possibility of our escaping, and turning round to view the fire, saw one of the actors tearing down the scenery—and still thinking it was only the scenery on fire, felt not the least alarmed.—On looking round in the boxes and pit, I could discover but very few people, and those were all near us—on account of the vast number crowding for the stairs caused our stay, and we being kindness and all on a sudden the stairs gave way with the crowd, and left us alone—that moment the smoke rushed up with such heat, we could scarcely get breath, and on turning round to get breath discovered fresh air, which I fortunately found proceeded from a window, it being so very dark it was impossible to see—nor could we hear any person near us from the time we left the stairs, until we descended the window. I put my daughter out of the window, and immediately followed myself—she was fortunately caught by some gentleman, and escaped unhurt, and

myself but slightly. One of the gentlemen says he is very certain there was none came out after us through the front windows, and in less than ten minutes after we left, the flames rushed out of the windows. All those that fell with the stair case must nearly have expired with the smoke at the time, as the smoke was excessively severe. I heard neither sigh nor groan uttered from any one of them. It is my opinion had the people in the lower boxes got down in the pit and passed out of the west side, it would certainly have given room for the upper boxes, and by that means almost every soul would have been saved.

I am yours with sincere respect,

JEDEDIAH ALLEN.

DEAR SIR—What I know concerning that destructive fire, from actual observation, is, although limited, very correct, having had no particular relative to protect; every object of distress, that came within my observance from the beginning to the end is as clearly before my mind's eye now as it was at the unfortunate crisis.

I told you, that Mr. G. and myself were walking up the hill, not more than twenty or thirty perches from the theatre, when the first flash appeared—he ran frantic to the protection of his wife and child; I, coolly and deliberately to that of all within my power—the first I beheld in distress riveted my whole attention—at the north west window in the front of the Theatre, a number of ladies appeared, most of whose faces I knew—I called to them to jump out, they did and were all saved—even from a broken bone, yet some much injured by the flames—Mrs. McRae and Mrs Pickett were undoubtedly the two last who escaped from the ruins.

The female part of Mr. Richards' family with many more had been received before uninjured—altho' frequently knocked down, I received *all the ladies* from that window and no man ever assisted one of them. If it were necessary I could be particular in Mrs Pickett's case—as she suffered more from unfeeling men than any lady I saw—as soon as she was safe, I ran round the building to see if any body else could be saved—I saw that all within were lost, my attention was next drawn to the door, near which I had stood from the beginning; there the

blackened and lifeless bodies of many who are now in a fair way of recovery, were trodden down by a gaping multitude—I, with the assistance of a few whom I do not recollect, dragged out many apparently dead—among who a were Miss Davis and Mr. Tilda, and with Capt. Heth, carried off the unfortunate Miss Harvie: these were all the bodies I recognized, the last of whom appeared most likely to live; for she could speak, but the others, although not much damaged externally, were apparently lifeless.

The most pleasing part of my life was that which I spent in the act of preservation, but the most melancholy in assisting the preserved and seeking the lost—you saw part of that yourself.

Your friend and servant,

D. DOYLE.

SIR—In compliance with your request, I send you a brief statement of the little to which I was an eye witness in the late disastrous fire at the Theatre. I was at the head of the brick-row, on my way from the play, when I heard the first cry of fire—without any other delay than was occasioned by aiding in drawing the fire engine about 10 or 15 yards, I hastened to the theatre door. Mr Allen Taylor had just come out, and Mrs. Gibbon was standing still immediately within, apparently in a state of stupefaction—I drew her through the door and proceeded on to the partition door where the checks were received—between these doors I met several men and women making their way out——in my progress to the stair-case, I saw no person of any description——but *along the stairs* from the first landing place lay a number of women on their faces, side by side, their heads towards the floor—They were all apparently lifeless—and their clothes were in the greatest disorder.

My first impulse was to take up one of the smaller—In carrying her to the outer door I met no one——but two men there received her. Three or four gentlemen who I presume, had been before employed in taking out the females afterwards came in, and lost no time in removing the other ladies. They were all carried as far as the door, and there they were received and borne off by others.

D.

I think that Mr. John G. Smith and Mr. Alexr. Sharp of this town were two of those who were in the house with me, and were very active. I distinctly recollect what I saw when I first went in, but the horror of the spectacle which presented itself to my eyes on the stairs, (unapprized as I was until then that I had not met the last of the audience,) makes my recollection very confused of what passed afterwards. I am however confident that all those who had reached the lower flight of the stairs were rescued from the flames, and I flatter myself that they are now living. Mr. Smith and Mr. Sharp, and probably one or two others, can vouch for the same fact.

Your's, &c.

G. TUCKER.

REPORT

Of the Committee of Investigation.

DECEMBER 30, 1811.

We the Committee, appointed by our fellow-citizens "to enquire into the causes of the melancholy catastrophe" which took place in this city on Thursday night last; a catastrophe, which has spread a gloom over a whole city, and filled every eye with tears; have given to this melancholy duty all the attention in our power.—We feel it due to ourselves; it was due to our weeping fellow-citizens: it was due to the world to collect all the lights which might serve to elucidate an event whose effects are so deeply written on our hearts.—We have seen every person who was behind the scenes, that was best able to assist our enquiries—we have heard their statements, and after sifting them as accurately as possible, beg leave to submit the following report to our afflicted citizens:

On the night of Thursday last, the Pantomime of "The Bleeding Nun, or, Agnes and Raymond" came on for representation after the play was over. In the first Act, among other scenes, was the scene of the Cottage of Bastist the Robber, which was illuminated by a chandelier apparently hanging from the ceiling. When the curtain fell on the first act and before it rose on the second, some

chandelier was lifted from its position among the scenery above. It was fixed with two wicks to it; one only of them had been lit: yet when it was lifted above, *this lighted lamp was not extinguished*. Here is the first link in the chain of our disasters! The man who raised it, does not pretend to deny it—but pleads that he did so in consequence of an order from some person, whom he supposed authorised to direct him. That person was behind him; the voice had reached him, without his seeing the person, and he does not pretend positively to recognize him. We have not the most distant idea that there was the slightest mischievous intention in the order or in the act—it was inattention—it was the grossest negligence. The lifter of the lamp says that he was aware of the danger, and remonstrated against the act; yet yielded with too fatal a facility to the reiterated orders of a person whom he saw not, but supposed authorised to direct him. We cast not the slightest imputations upon the Managers or any of the regular Comedians of the stage—their positions at the moment as well as other cirsumstances, forbid the idea that the order ever passed from their lips; yet the act was done. The lighted lamp was lifted—the torch of destruction gleamed at the top of the stage.

Mr. Rice (the property-man of the Theatre) says, that he saw the scene was over in which the lamp was used; he saw the lamp after it was lifted up; he was aware of the danger of its remaining in that position; and spoke to one of the carpenters, three times repeatedly, "Lower that lamp and blow it out." He did not see it put out; for he was drawn by his business to another part of the stage.

Mr. West declares that he was passing by to commence the 2d act of the pantomime, and saw the lamp up and heard Rice giving directions to the carpenter to extinguish it.

Mr. Cook (the regular carpenter of the Theatre) declares that he saw the carpenter alluded to above, attempting to let down the lamp immediately after the order to let it down had been given; that he has no doubt this attempt was made in consequence of the order; that he saw the cords tangle and the lamp to oscillate several inches from its perpendicular position. The chandelier above was moved by two cords which worked over two pulleys,

inserted in the collar-beam of the roof; and the straight line from the beam to the lamp was, Mr. Cook thinks, about 14 or 15 feet. Thus some idea may be had of the degree of oscillation.

Mr. Anderson (one of the Performers of the Theatre) says, that he had remarked, even before the representation, how unskilfully the chandelier had played; and that an attempt to move it had caused it to ride circularly around.

Mr. Yore (another of the workmen of the machinery.) most conclusively confirms this statement. He saw, that in the attempt to lower the lamp, as it was perched among the scenery, the carpenter had failed in his effort: that he then jerked it and jostled it; that it was thus swerved from its perpendicular attitude, and brought into contact with the lower part of one of the front scenes. The scene took fire: the flame rose, and tapering *above it* to a point, must have reached the roof, which was elevated 6 or 7 feet only above the top of the scene.

We were assured, that there was not one *transparent* scene hanging; that is, a scene coated with varnish and extremely combustible—that there was only one paper scene hanging, which Mr. Utt the Prompter declares, was removed 5 or 8 feet behind the lamp. Thirty-five scenes were at that moment hanging, exclusive of the flies or narrow borders which represent the skies, roofs, &c.—and of these 34 were canvass paintings; which though not extremely combustible on the painted side, are on the other so well covered with the fibres of the hemp, as to catch the flame.

Efforts were made to extinguish the flame. Mr. Cook, the carpenter, ascended into the carpenter's gallery: but in vain. He *did* succeed in letting down some of the scenes upon the floor, under an idea that this was the surest means of extinguishing the flame: but he could not distinguish the cords of the scene that was on fire. The roof soon caught, and the sense of danger compelled him to fly for his life.

The committee must now be under the necessity of drawing the attention of our fellow-citizens, to the events which took place in front of the curtain. Mr. West states, that immediately on his entering the stage to go on with his part, he heard some bustle behind the scenes, which

he conceived to be a mere fracas—the cry of "fire" then saluted his ears, which gave him no serious apprehensions, as he knew that little accidents of this description had often taken place; that he heard some voices exclaim, "don't be alarmed," which exclamation he repeated through a solicitude to prevent hurry and confusion; that he had not at that moment seen any flakes of fire fall behind the scene; but seeing them at length falling from the roof, he retired behind the scene and found the whole stage enveloped in flames; when finding it unavailing, he attempted to make good his own retreat.

Mr. Robertson, who was the only performer besides, that came before the audience, assured the committee, that at the moment when he first discovered the flame, it was no longer than his handkerchief; that he repaired immediately to the stage, as near the orchestra as he could come: "there he conveyed to the audience, not wishing to alarm them, by gesticulation to leave the house; that in the act of doing that, he discovered the flames moving rapidly, and then he exclaimed, "The house (or the Theatre) is on fire;" that he went directly to the stage-box where some three or four ladies were sitting, entreating them to jump into his arms; that he could save them by conveying them through the private stage-door; and that he still intreated, until he found it necessary to make his own escape; that his own retreat by the private door was intercepted by the flames: that he found it necessary to leap into the stage-box, and join the general crowd in the lobby; that he gained one of the front windows; assisted in passing out some ten or twelve females, but at last found it necessary to throw himself from the window."

This narrative is due to the exertions of a gentleman, who first sounded the alarm; and to whom there are a few who have not done that justice which he deserves—Let us now return to the transmission of the fire—where the point of flame reached the roof. The roof was unfortunately not plastered and sealed—there was a sheating of plank, pine plank we are told, nailed over the rafters, and over these, the shingles. The rozin of the pine had perhaps oozed out of the plank, through the heat of our summer's sun, and stood in drops upon it. Yet however this may have been, no sooner did the spark of the flame reach the roof than it caught. The fire spread with a rapidity

thro' this combustible material, unparalleled, certainly never equalled by any of the too numerous fires which have desolated our city—In four or five minutes at least, the whole roof was one sheet of flame—it burst through the bull's-eye in front—it sought the windows where the rarefied vapour sought its passage; fed by the vast volume of air in the hollows of a Theatre, fed by the inflammable panels and pillars of the boxes, by the dome of the pit, by the canvas ceiling of the lower boxes, until its suffocated victims in the front were wrapt in its devouring flame, or pressed to death under the smouldering ruins of the building.

Here might we pause in our melancholy task. We have traced the conflagration to the fatal lamp, lifted as it was lit, then jerked and jostled out of its perpendicular position, to the scenery—to the roof; until every thing was enveloped in its fury. But there is one part of the subject which, though it does not fall strictly within the letter of the *Resolution*, or perhaps the line of our duty, is yet too interesting to be passed over. Why, *this fatality?* Why have *so many* victims perished on this melancholy occasion? It cannot be said that it was the combustibility of the building and the rapidity of the fire, great as they undoubtedly were, which altogether produced this mortality of the species—for we cannot believe, if large vomitories had been erected for the passage of the crowd, if there had been doors enough to admit them, that more than *one-tenth* of an audience should have perished on the occasion.

It was, in the opinion of the committee, this ill construction of the Theatre itself, which was principally its cause. How numerous were the occasions on which it had long before been said, as the crowd was slowly retiring at the end of a play: "Suppose the house were on fire, what should we do?"—Yet we slept with too fatal a security over the evil—we trusted and we are ruined. New doors were not opened; the winding stair-case was not straitened, the access to the avenues of the Theatre was not enlarged.

Even the relicts of our fellow-citizens as they lay, pointed out the causes of this fatality. They were found strewed in heaps at the foot of the narrow stair case which lead from the boxes and though with less profusion, on the ground immediately *under* the lobby of the

boxes above, from which lobby their retreat down the stairs had been intercepted by the crowd which choaked them up. On that fatal night, there were in the pit and boxes 518 dollar tickets, and 80 children—exclusive of 50 persons who were in the galleries. Of these, 598 had to pass through one common avenue, and although all the spectators in the pit may have escaped, except a few who may have jumped into the boxes, yet the crowd in the lower and upper boxes had no other resource than to press through a narrow angular stair-case, or to leap the windows. The committee not being particularly conversant with the construction of Theatres, have requested Mr. Twaits one of the managers of this Theatre, to furnish us with his ideas on the subject. He has favored us with a statement which we beg leave to incorporate with our report, in the words following, to wit:

"By the request of the Committee of Enquiry into the cause of the late dreadful calamity at the theatre on the night of the 26th instant, I affirm that the loss of so many valuable lives, and the distress which is felt by all on the occasion, is wholly attributable to the construction of the late theatre and its materials.

"In all theatres, that I have seen, except the late one, there have been three distinct and separate doors of entrance—one to the boxes, one to the pit and one to the Gallery. The late Drury-Lane Theatre had in the centre of each side a spacious hall, with broad and straight stair cases, which terminated in the lobbies of the Boxes; three entrances to the Pit, one in the front and one on each side; and four entrances to two Galleries, two on each side. These avenues were firm and commodious, and in their construction prefented every facility for escape, when any danger alarmed the audience. Miserable reverse! In the late Richmond Theatre, but one entrance to the Boxes and Pit, and that so narrow, that two persons could scarcely pass at the same time—the way then lying through a gloomy passage to a narrow winding stair case which terminated in as narrow a Lobby ——It is, therefore, evident, that this ever to be lamented loss, which has at once deprived your city of some of its brightest ornaments, and desolated many families, is wholly attributable to the mal-construction of the late Theatre, which certainly offered no means of speedy escape. The rapidity of the conflagration must have been caused by the combustible state of the building, there being no plastered ceiling or wall to prevent the communication of flame."

The Committee cannot close their melancholy labours without expressing one hope, that irreparable as our own calamities have been, we may not have suffered altogether in vain, that our own misfortunes may serve as beacons to the rest of our countrymen; and that no theatres should be permitted to be opened in the other cities of the U. States, until every facility has been procured for the escape of the audience.

ORDINANCES.

On the 27th of Dec. the Common Council of the city of Richmond, assembled and passed an order authorising Dr. Adams, Mr. William Fay, Mr. Falston and Mr. Gamble to collect and deposit the remains of the unfortunate sufferers, in such urns, coffins, or other suitable inclosures as they shall think fit, and have them conveyed to the public burial ground with the solemnity due to the occasion. On the 28th it was represented to the President and Council, that the remains of the devoted victims could not conveniently be removed to the public burial ground, wherefore it was ordered, that the relicts should be all interred in the place where they fell, and that the ground should be purchased and appropriated accordingly. Moreover, it was ordered, "that the city Constable communicate to the citizens, that it is earnestly recommended, that they will abstain from all business for the space of forty-eight hours after the passing of the ordinance, that the Wednesday following should be observed as a day of humiliation and prayer; and that no shows, plays, public balls or assemblies should be exhibited within the city for the space of four months."

Similar orders and resolutions were passed by the people and the Constituted authorities in Norfolk, Petersburg, Fredericksburg, and most of the principal towns of Virginia. The Executive passed a resolution expressive of their sorrow for the loss of their beloved *governor*, as well as for that of their other fellow citizens. Congress followed their example. Upwards of 100 Medical Students from this state, assembled in Philadelphia, put on the weeds of woe, and prepared to honor the manes of their brothers and sisters; the young gentlemen of the city caught the sympathetic flame, and requested to participate in the mournful procession, they were admitted, and bewailed the fate of those whom they never knew; but than whom, they never can know characters superior.

The young gentlemen of the Navy paid appropriate honors to the memory of their beloved fellow-soldier, Lieut. Gibbon: poor fellow! his fate was a peculiar one; so was that of the great partner of his fate—"requiescat in pace."

TO THE CITIZENS OF RICHMOND.

In the sincerity of afflicted minds, and deeply wounded hearts, permit us to express the anguish which we feel for the late dreadful calamity, of which we cannot but consider ourselves the innocent cause. From a liberal and enlightened community we fear no reproaches, but we are conscious that many have too much cause to wish they had never known us. To their mercy we appeal for forgiveness, not for a crime committed, but for one which could not be prevented. Our own loss cannot be estimated but by ourselves—'tis true, (with one exception,) we have not to lament the loss of life—but we have lost our friends, our patrons, our property, and in part, our homes. Nor is this all our loss—in this miserable calamity we find a sentence of banishment from your hospitable city. Nor more do we expect to feel that glow of pleasure which pervades a grateful heart, while it receives favours liberally bestowed. Never again shall we behold that feminine humanity which so eagerly displayed itself to soothe the victim of disease, nor view with exultation the benevolent who fostered the fatherless, and shed a ray of comfort on the departing soul of a dying mother. Here then we cease—the eloquence of Grief, is Silence.

James Rose,
Hopkins Robertson,
Chas. Young,
Charles Durang,
Wm. Twaits,
Thos. Caulfield,
William Anderson,
Thomas Burke,
A. Placide,
J. W. Green,
Wm. Clark.

INTERMENT OF THE DEAD.

The arrangements for this melancholy occasion could not be completed before Sunday—and as the place of interment had been changed from the Church to the area where the Theatre stood, to that fatal and devoted spot, the funeral procession did not move as was originally contemplated by the Committee, from the Baptist Meeting-House, near the Theatre, where the relics lay, to the Church where the interment was intended to be made.

The mournful procession began at Mr. Tyler and Freer's on the Main street, where the remains of the unfortunate Mrs. Patterson lay—in front, the Corpse—then the Clergy—Ladies in carriages—the Executive Council—Directors of the Bank—Members of the Legislature—the Court of Hustings—Common Hall—Citizens on foot and on horse back.—— why paint the length and solemnity of the line? They moved up the main street until they struck the cross street leading to the Bank—here they were joined by the Corpse of poor *Juliana Lawrie*, who expired at her brother in law's—the Cashier of the Bank—they moved up the Capitol Hill, and at the Capitol were joined by the bearers of two large mahogany boxes, in which were enclosed the ashes and relics of the deceased. The mournful procession then moved to "the devoted spot:" and in the centre of the area where once stood the pit, these precious relics were buried in one common grave. The service for the dead was read by the Rev. Mr. Buchanan—The whole scene defies description. A whole city bathed in tears!——How awful the transition on this devoted spot!—A few days since, it was the theatre of joy and merriment—animated by the sound of music and the hum of a delighted multitude. It is now a funeral pyre! the receptacle of the relics of our friends!—and in a short time a monument will stand upon it to point out where their ashes lay!

A LIST OF DEAD.

Margaret Anderson.

Adeline Bausman, daughter of Mrs. Bausman,
Mrs. Taylor Braxton,
Benjamin Botts and Mrs. Botts

Mary Clay,
Sally Conyers,

Mrs. Convert and child,
William Cook and daughter,
Margaret Copland,
C. Coutts,
Elvira Coutts,
Anne Craig, daughter of Mrs. Adam Craig,

Mrs. Mary Davis,
George Dixon, a youth.

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Miss Elliott, from N. Kent.

Thomas Frazer, a youth.
Mrs. Gallego,
Gibson,
Girardin and son,
Robert Greenhow,
Gerard,
Sally Gatewood,
Anne Green,
Patsy Griffin,
Lieut. James Gibbon.

Mrs. Heron,
Ariana Hunter,
Mrs. Jerrod,
Elizabeta Jacobs, daughter of Joseph Jacobs,
Barrach Judah's child.

Mrs. Laforest,
Lesslie,
Miss Littlepage,
Thomas Leeroix.

Mrs. Moss,
Cyprian Marks, wife of Mordecai Marks,
Louisa Mayo,

Jacob Nelson,
Mr. Nuttal.

Mrs. Elizabeth Page,
Pickit,

Charlotte Raphael,
Jean Baptiste Rozier,

George W. Smith, Governor,
William Southgate,
Elizabeth Stevenson.

Cecelia Trouin,
Sophia Trouin.

Abraham B. Venable, President of the Bank.

Mrs. Thomas Wilson,
Mary Whitlock,
Jane Wade,
James Waldon,
John Welch, a stranger, lately from England, and Nephew to Sir A. Pigot.
Edward Wanton,

Mr. Wm. Brown,
Mr. A. Marshal of Wythe,
Mrs. Patterson,
} *Crushed to death.*

On the 27th Dec.	Miss Juliana Harvie,
28th,	Mrs. John Boston,
29th	Mr. E. J. Harvie,
3d Jan. 1812,	Mr. John Staub,
18th	Mrs. Scott,
	John J. Allcock, a youth.

PEOPLE OF COLOUR.

Robert Ferrill, a mulatto boy,
Fanny Goff.
Betsey Johnson,
Philadelphia,
Pleasant, a mulatto woman belonging to Mr. Rose
James Edmonson, a mulatto boy, who died since.

RICHMOND, December, 23.

Yesterday such of the remains of our much lamented fellow-citizens who lost their lives in the conflagration of the Theatre on Thursday night, were entombed on the spot where the direful catastrophe happened. A larger concourse of people attended on this melancholy occasion, than we recollect ever to have seen assembled in this place.

December 31.

Yesterday was "a day of humiliation and prayer."—All the shops and stores were shut. the Rev. Mr. Blair preached at the church, a funeral sermon. Every place of public worship was opened. Mr. Speece preached at the Capitol in the morning. Mr. Logan in the evening.—Mr Brice and Mr Grigg at the Baptist meeting house in the morning. Mr Courtney at the new Methodist Church in the morning—and at the old one. Mr. Bellen in the morning and Mr. Moore in the Evening. Every place was filled to overflowing.

Casualties.

In the chapter of accidents, it is painful to be obliged to mention the name of Mr. Richard Labrey, one of the most promising literary characters in Virginia; he was in the upper tier of boxes, and in the act of assisting some ladies unknown to him, when that destructive vapour, mentioned in other communications, suddenly issued from the eastern part of the building—he saw no flame, yet his

face and one of his hands have been deeply burnt; he attempted to save himself by the stairs; but seeing them strewed by the bodies of prostrated ladies, he thought, sooner than injure them with his feet, he would trust his fate to chance, and accordingly jumped out of one of the upper windows—his life is, thank God, saved, yet he has suffered severely, and indeed, still suffers.

Dr. McCaw's situation is truly deplorable, as well on account of his own family, as that of the poor unfortunate sufferers on that occasion—his assistance as a physician and as a friend, would have been a balm to the woes of many; it may not be deemed presumption in saying, in the loss of his aid, some lives have been lost. The injury he has received is not incurable, but it is such as to neutralize his useful services for a long time; after having exerted his strength, for the safety of the poor suffering ladies within his reach, when all on fire himself, he precipitated himself from the window, (say 20 feet high,) his whole weight coming on his right leg, so lacerated the muscles, as to cause him to imagine for some time that his thigh was broken.

Many persons had their limbs fractured, and some were severely burnt; yet most of them are now in a fair way of recovery Mr. John Richards, in escaping through a window, fractured a limb; Mr. Samuel Dyer met with a similar accident; Carter B. Page also escaped with a broken leg; Mrs. Hatcher of Manchester, received considerable injury from a fracture. To enumerate all the accidents, would at present be exceeding the limits which we have prescribed for ourselves on the present occasion.

In order to refresh the mind after this lugubrious narrative, we give an account of a few hair-breadth escapes made by some of our ladies, taken from a gentleman who has conversed with them since their escape.

Mrs. McRae miraculously escaped without the assistance of any person within; she wandered about in the dark over seats and benches; she thinks sometime in the pit, she afterwards ascended the boxes; she could neither see nor feel any person; her senses were nearly exhausted, when part of the building fell, and gave her light to see a passage through the window; she was then in the lobby, and meeting with no obstruction, threw herself out head foremost, and was fortunately received without suffering any material injury.

Her sister Miss Delia Hayes was saved by the happy attention of Mr. Thomas Harrison, who had another young lady under his protection, whom he let down from a window; he pushed Miss Hayes over the obstructing crowd, she fell in the passage, was trodden down for some time, but by the assistance of a gentleman at the landing, was pulled from the fallen, and fortunately recovered unhurt.—Misses McMurdo and Green, bustled their way till they arrived at the inner door, when Miss McMurdo, being next to it, and having poor Miss Green by the hand, was seized herself by some body outside, who pulled her out, and by the violence of his exertion, she lost her hold of Miss Green, who was still able to cry out, "oh! don't leave me;" a volley of vapour at that time rushed from that door to the outer door, so thick, that nobody could stand there, and many had fallen; it is imagined that Miss Green, with some more in that darkness, missed the door and fell, and could not receive timely relief. Miss Couch also, without any particular protector, escaped unhurt, one of the last; being a delicate young lady, she was several times thrown back by inhuman selfish men; she finally, when almost exhausted, made a desperate effort, and was like the rest, caught uninjured; she, having near a mile to walk, would not admit of the attendance of any person, seeing so many objects in distress, who had a greater claim to assistance than she had; but before she went far she was near falling a victim to her humanity, for, from the great exertions of body and mind necessary to her preservation—her spirits failed her, and she must have lain probably lifeless, in the street that night, had not a gentleman fortunately seen her, and after reviving her, brought her home.

Mr. L. H. Girardin, who has lost an affectionate amiable wife, and a son whose dawn promised a bright day, had left the Theatre in company with Mr. Boyle, just a few moments before the fire commenced. He had left his wife and son with several of their male and female relatives, because an acute complaint did not allow of his being confined in a box. In the course of the first piece, he had been walking or standing in various parts of the house: just when the pantomime was about to begin, he observed his dear boy asleep in his mother's arms, urged his parting from home—a too indulgently fond mother objected—Alas!

the poor child was still asleep, when the horrid alarm appalled every heart! Mrs. G—shrother, under whose protection she more especially was, did every thing he could to save her and her child; vain, fruitless efforts! Twice she was torn from her beloved boy—twice she rushed to recover him. The second time her brotherwas irresistibly separated from her: he saw her no more, and was ultimately compelled by the approaching flames to jump out of a window. Thus it appears that this excellent lady fell a victim to maternal love! She would not be saved without her darling boy, and both were lost! O God! the heart of a mother is thy master piece! As to Mr. Gi—rdin, the moment he saw the flames, he rushed back into the house: found the first passage almost empty; brought out of the house a female whom he found in a state of distraction, near the box where tickets were taken inside; returned, entered the circular passage, and had reached the foot of the fatal stair-case, when burning ruins fell down with horrid crash: volumes of suffocating vapour rolled onwards: lurid flames darted through them; he with the utmost difficulty retreated: was, in his retreat, grasped by a half prostrate female, whom he raised and brought out; he returned to the Ticket door; alas! destruction was already raging with all its fury in the circular passage, which the vapour and flame prevented him from again entering: he then went to the eastern side in search of his wife and son; then round the whole house: then home; alas! his fears were realized: and all remaining hopes vanished. He is now left, like so many others, a disconsolate mourner!

Such circumstances could be multiplied, to fill a volume, by those who continued on the ground and in the neighbering houses all that night, but these cases being not so particularly known, we think proper to insert them.

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